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Minutemen Trust Few in Fighting 'Red Takeover'

Leader Addresses 150 at Van Nuys Meeting of Southland Freedom Councils

BY PAUL WEEKS
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The crowd was restless.

The meeting called by the Southern California Freedom Councils to present a Minuteman as their speaker had been delayed because the Knights of Columbus in Van Nuys had canceled their hall rental.

The crowd of about 150 was settling into folding chairs in the quickly substituted Sons of Norway Hall, 14312 Friar St., 40 minutes after the scheduled 8 o'clock starting time.

There were old ladies. Young boys. Well-dressed young women. Men in working clothes. There seemed to be no pattern.

Asks Press to Leave

Dennis Mower, the blond-haired, 18-year-old "president" of the councils, had said earlier that only "genuine conservatives" would be admitted to the meeting.

"If there are any members of the press present," he said, "I urge them to leave now — peaceably." Heads were craned. No one left.

A television cameraman tried to squeeze through the front door. It was closed against him. Windows were snapped shut. Curtains drawn.

Mower suggested, with a smile, that some who might want to take pictures were not the press but "Communists or agitators" who would want a pictorial record of those present.

Prepared for Walker

After recitation of the Lord's Prayer, the Pledge to the Flag and singing of "The Star-Spangled Banner," Mower said that if any ladies were squeamish they could leave before showing of a motion picture.

Then Troy Haughton, 31, identified as western regional director for the Minutemen, said the picture would be a documentary of Communists' treatment of prisoners of war. It was prepared, he said, for Gen. Edwin Walker in his "pro-Blue program" for the troops "which the Army censored."

The Minutemen, a secret, paramilitary organization preparing a guerrilla defense against what they consider a virtually inevitable "Marxist takeover" of the United States, says in a pamphlet:

"A pro-American government can no longer be established by normal political means. There has not been one Presidential election since World War II where the American public has had an opportunity to vote for a real American."

On the press, the pamphlet warns: "The Communists realize that their control over the American news media is a weapon more powerful than their mechanized troops."

'Controlled By Enemy'

It goes on to say that "all the media of mass communication are effectively controlled by the enemy so they can make people think whatever they want them to think."

Haughton stressed the Minutemen's contention that government, authority, power is corrupted by Communist infiltration.

Gen. Walker appeared in the prologue to the movie, "one of 23 prints" which the government wasn't able to suppress, Haughton said.

The body of the picture was an unspeakable portrayal of butchery, terror, brutality. In one scene a man in a Japanese military uniform was torturing a prisoner.

"The uniform is false," the narrator said. "The man is really a Communist."

When the lights went on, Haughton, wearing horn-rimmed spectacles, leaned heavily on a lectern and read haltingly from his notes. He apologized for having a poor memory and having to read his remarks. Sometimes he couldn't read his notes and shrugged his shoulders.

The essence of his talk was that few are to be trusted, and that the Minutemen must use cunning, deceit and subterfuge—and guns—to fight the deceitful Communist takeover.

Enemy Tactics Urged

He wouldn't be surprised if it happened in five years, he said.

(The pamphlet says "... we must use our enemies' own tactics against them. Today's wars are not being won by massed armies or atomic bombs. They are being won by psychopolitical weapons, by infiltration, subversion and espionage.")

Haughton urged infiltration into politics. One way to help a candidate, he said, would be to infiltrate the opposition party, and, say, volunteer to distribute leaflets—then throw them all down a storm drain.

Continued

Method Of Infiltration
Haughton laughed. The crowd laughed.

Or, he suggested, one could do wonders to sabotage an organization by infiltrating it with a switchboard operator or a secretary who could cause no end of damage.

Two women, he said, infiltrated the organization of a long-established political machine in a Midwestern city two years ago and caused so much trouble and consternation the machine lost an election.

Haughton often drew applause and cheers.

When the meeting was opened to questions and discussion, one man told of a high-caliber deer rifle he has stored away along with hundreds of rounds of ammunition for the day he will need it.

Suggests Racial Use

A grandmotherly appearing woman, with soft white hair, turned around to the stranger sitting behind her, and suggested in a conspiratorial and somewhat obscene manner that the grip was for use in racial conflict.

Haughton went on to tell how the general public doesn't know it, but all kinds of effective weapons, including military surplus, are available for purchase.

"You can get flame-throwers for \$3 apiece at Barstow," he said.

He also said with broad innuendo that rifle clubs are booming in California. You wouldn't find out from any rifle club member that he belonged to the Minutemen, said Haughton.

There were ways, he said, to get weapons and ammunition economically through the government for target practice and training.

"When our constitutional government is threatened," the pamphlet says, "we are morally justified in resorting to violence to discourage Communists and their fellow travelers."

Nationally, Haughton said, the Minutemen claim 25,000 members. He would not detail procedure for obtaining membership because of the possibility that unfriendly persons were present.

In fact, he had opened his speech by addressing, somewhat facetiously, "Patriots and the FBI," to indicate his professed awareness of being watched.

The grandmotherly lady, late in the evening, said to the stranger and another man beside him:

"You boys ought to know that (a department store) is having a big bargain on tomorrow—22 longs for a penny apiece!"

Tells Objectives

Haughton followed the Minutemen's line, as set down in the pamphlet, with remarkable accuracy.

The Minuteman pamphlet says "the objectives of the Minutemen are to abandon wasteful, useless efforts and begin immediately to prepare for the day when Americans will once again fight in the streets for their lives and their liberty."

The meeting was closed with the singing, to piano accompaniment, of the first and fourth verses of "America."

The singing of the fourth stanza was not as strong as the singing of the first, because fewer knew the lines which go:

"... Long may our land be
bright
With freedom's
holy light ..."

Then the 18-year-old president suggested those in the hall might find it more convenient to exit through darkened rear doors to avoid meeting newsmen waiting outside in front.

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